

# Alliance Voices

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# **Socialist Alliance: Building a fighting alternative**

## **PROPOSED AGENDA**

**\* DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME STARTS AT 2am ON THIS SUNDAY SO TURN YOUR CLOCKS BACK 1 HOUR - THE CONFERENCE WILL START AN HOUR EARLIER THAN IN STANDARD TIME.**

### **9.00-9.30am Conference welcome, agenda & procedures**

Lisa Macdonald (SA national executive)

### **9.30-11.00am: Plenary session: Australian politics today and the role of the Socialist Alliance**

9.30-10.00am

\* Chris Cain (WA state secretary Maritime Union of Australia): The fight for workers and union rights

\* Rob Stary (Civil liberties lawyer) : The war of terror and the war on civil liberties

\* Dick Nichols (SA national executive) : The role of the Socialist Alliance

10.00-10.40am Plenary discussion

10.40-10.45am Voting on resolution

### **11.10am-1.00pm Plenary session: Fighting back, building the campaigns**

11.10-11.30am

\* Tim Gooden (Secretary of Geelong & Region Trades and Labour Council): The importance of militant unionism for our struggles against racism, neo-liberalism and war, and the outcomes of the October 28 National Trade Union Activists' Workshop.

### **11.20am-1.00pm Campaign workshops \***

(i) The Industrial Relations campaign and the November 30 national day of action

(ii) Against imperialist wars, Islamophobia and the assault on all democratic rights: "Stop Bush" 2007

(iii) Stop Indigenous deaths in custody!

(iv) No uranium mining, no nukes! Campaigning towards the ALP national conference

(v) Ending the ban on same-sex marriage

(vi) Venezuela: Building solidarity in Australia with the Bolivarian revolution

**\* Socialist Alliance members are welcome to organize other workshops in this session on areas of campaigning they are involved in.**

**1.00-2.00 Lunch:** *Cheap, tasty food will be available at the conference venue*

### **2.00-3.20pm Plenary session: Building the Socialist Alliance**

2.00-2.20pm

\* Sam Watson (Indigenous writer and activist): Socialist Alliance - a voice for the oppressed

\* United Casual Workers Alliance & raising the socialist flag on the Gold Coast

\* Peter Boyle (SA national executive): Slide-show presentation of Socialist Alliance in action nationwide in 2005-06

### **2.20-3.30pm Workshops**

(i) Taking socialism to regional areas

(ii) Socialist election campaigning

(iii) Political fundraising: Financing the fight-back

(iv) Using the Internet for campaigning (creating and using websites, blogs, etc)

(v) Radical journalism: How to write for *Green Left Weekly*

(vi) *Seeing Red* magazine

### **3.30-3.45pm Voting on SA building resolutions**

### **4.00-4.20pm National Treasurer's annual report, discussion and voting**

**4.20-5.00pm Constitution and national leadership report (Lisa Macdonald for national executive), discussion and voting**

**5.00-6.00pm Elections of the Socialist Alliance-Green Left Weekly editorial board, national office bearers and the National Executive**

**Conference close**

# Proposed amendments to Constitution

*This draft resolution is submitted to the 2006 National Conference by the National Executive.*

## **1. Delete 6.2, which states:**

6.2. Local branches are required to have paid their National Executive-ratified national pledge in full in order to be entitled to elect delegates to national conferences.

RATIONALE: With the National Executive decision to replace the branch pledge system with national finances appeals (March 26, 2006), this requirement for electing conference delegates became redundant. This will need to be put as a motion by the National Executive at the beginning of the national conference, in order for delegates to be seated for the conference.

## **2. Delete 6.8, which states:**

6.8. The following method shall apply for the election of the National Conveners:

- The National Conveners shall be elected by slate;
- Nominations of slates shall be open from the time of ratification of the National Executive by conference and close at the beginning of the final session of conference;
- Nominations for the positions of representatives of affiliate organisations on the National Executive shall be made by the affiliate organisations and made known by the opening of conference;
- Any conference delegate shall be eligible to present a slate;
- Nominees may decline nomination if they so wish;
- All slates nominated shall be available for scrutiny by conference;
- Voting shall be by show of hands;
- If no slate receives a majority of votes in the first round of voting, the slate with the least number of votes shall drop off and further rounds of voting conducted until one slate gains a majority.

RATIONALE: Last year's national conference forgot to remove this clause to bring the Constitution into line with the national leadership structures adopted by the 2005 national conference.

## **3. Delete 6.6 and 6.7, which state:**

6.6 The National Executive shall elect a National Treasurer, a National Coordinator, and Sub-committees as required to implement the decisions of the National Executive in between meetings.

6.7 The National Executive shall be composed according to the following formula:

- 15 persons to be elected by the same proportional representation system used in the election of conference delegates from the branches to guarantee minority representation (single transferable vote), with no more than 40% to be elected from any one affiliate, tendency or organised political current.
- In addition, any state or territory executive/committee which does not have a state member in the NE so elected shall have the right to send a delegate with voice and vote to all NE meetings, that delegate to be selected by the relevant state executive or state committee."

## **and replace them with:**

6.6 The National Conference shall elect a National Coordinator, National Trade Union and Anti-war Committee Conveners, a Socialist Alliance-*Green Left Weekly* Editorial Board Convener and the National Website Manager.

6.7 The National Executive shall be composed of:

- The National Coordinator, National Trade Union and Anti-war Committee Conveners, the Socialist Alliance-*Green Left Weekly* Editorial Board Convener, and the National Website Manager; and
- 12 state representatives composed of 3 from NSW, 2 each from Victoria and Queensland and 1 each from the other states and territories, those representatives to be selected by the relevant state executive or state committee.

6.8 The National Executive shall elect a National Treasurer and further national sub-committees as required.

RATIONALE: The National Executive (NE) structure adopted at the last national conference in May 2005 took a step towards establishing a more functional national leadership by removing the automatic representation of affiliates, regardless of their participation in building the Socialist Alliance, and shifting more towards leading the Socialist Alliance's week-to-week work via branch/state representation.

Since then, the NE has met regularly (approximately monthly) and has functioned relatively well, in particular through its greater attention to the Socialist Alliance's ongoing campaign activities. However, the structure adopted in 2005 worked only partially. In particular, the withdrawal from practical leadership of the Socialist Alliance by most of the affiliates has made an NE formula based, even in part, on members' unaffiliated/affiliated status impractical and meaningless.

Given the diversity of activities now being undertaken by Socialist Alliance members around the country, in response to political developments as they arise, the Socialist Alliance needs an NE that more directly reflects and supports the practical SA-building work of members in the local branches and campaign committees - that is, a body that is less a formally representative rubber stamp and more able to make decisions about the Socialist Alliance's ongoing work based on the maximum possible participation of members who are taking active responsibility for building the Socialist Alliance and its campaigns.

This proposed NE structure, which combines national activists (through the national campaign committee coordinators and office bearers) with branch activists, will enable the fullest possible participation of non-affiliated members on the NE without placing impractical limitations on affiliated members' ability to participate in the NE. The explicit inclusion of national office-bearers in the NE, and their election at the National Conference (rather than appointment by the NE after the conference), will ensure that those comrades carrying out day-to-day national coordination of SA's main areas of work are kept accountable.

The proposal assumes that the NE will continue to use proxies and invitations flexibly in order to involve, as appropriate, a range of members in its deliberations.

**Branches/state representation:** The diversity of local branches' discussions and activities cannot be transmitted into the NE via one part-time national coordinator; more direct input is necessary to enable the NE to operate as a real national body. This has been evident in the very useful contributions over the last year by NE members representing the states/branches.

This element of the NE needs to be strengthened, however, one representative from every local branch would result in an NE that is too large to be genuinely inclusive, and would make meetings prohibitively expensive. Therefore, this proposal is based on state representation, but weighted on the basis of the number of independently functioning branches in each state. In particular, it will enable more regional branch participation in the NE than currently. In so far as states/territories are responsible for selecting their own representatives, it also allows flexibility for states/territories to make the most effective use of their representation on the NE.

**National campaign committees:** Over the last year, much of the leadership of the Socialist Alliance's campaigning has been taken by the national Trade Union Committee, which meets frequently, involves in its discussions and decision-making a range of members from around the country, and reports regularly to the NE. The usefulness of this committee for advancing the Socialist Alliance's campaigning and involving more members in the Socialist Alliance's national leadership reflects the priority that SA has given this work. We should try to duplicate this type of national coordination in the other key area of the Socialist Alliance's work, the anti-war campaign, and reflect this on the NE.

**SA-Green Left Weekly Editorial Board:** The editorial board is responsible for overseeing Socialist Alliance input into *GLW*, and specifically for organising the production of "Our Common Cause" every week. As a significant part of strengthening the Socialist Alliance's public profile and campaign work, the SA content in *GLW* needs to both reflect and be fed back into national leadership discussions. This can best be done by including the Editorial Board Convener on the NE.

**National coordinator:** The National Coordinator needs to continue to be on the NE in order to both have input into the NE discussions and to implement NE decisions effectively in between NE meetings.

**Website manager:** The position of Website Manager was created by the current NE as part of our aim to establish and maintain an up-to-date, accessible and useful national website for the Socialist Alliance. Considerable progress has been made in this project, in part because the current Website Manager has participated in all NE discussions and been able to reflect the national discussions, campaigns and priorities on the site.

#### **4. In 8.1 and 8.8, replace the word "Conveners" with "Executive":**

8.1 The basic unit of the Socialist Alliance is the local branch. A branch shall have at least seven members. Each new branch must be ratified by the National executive taking into account the location of other branches, including in relation to federal and state electoral work. All Alliance members will be assigned to a branch by the appropriate district organising committee (see below) or, in the case of remote regions, by the National Conveners.

8.8 Where branch meetings will conduct elections for office bearers, delegates or candidate pre-selections (except where a public election called at short notice makes this notice impossible), or consider a motion to close the branch, then 28 days' notice of the meeting and the intended ballot or motion shall be given to all members of that branch, and the National Conveners shall be advised of the motion.

RATIONALE: As above, removing these references to the non-existent national conveners was an oversight at the 2005 national conference.

#### **5. Delete 9.8, which states:**

State and Territory conferences shall:

- Ratify their unaligned State/Territory representatives on the National Executive;
- Elect any additional National Executive representatives from their State/Territory as required;
- Take reports from their State/Territory representatives on the National Executive.

#### **and replace it with:**

State and Territory conferences shall:

- Elect/ratify the National Executive representative/s from their State/Territory, as required;

- Take reports from their State/Territory representatives on the National Executive.

RATIONALE: As above, this change brings the Constitution into line with the national leadership structure adopted at the 2005 national conference, which removed the relevance of “unaligned” or “additional” state/territory representatives.

## Transport to the national conferences from Melbourne

### 1. Avalon Airport Shuttle bus (Jetstar arrivals)

The Avalon to Geelong bus meets all incoming and outgoing flights. There is no need to book a seat in advance. \$17 one way.

Return from Geelong to Avalon MUST be pre-booked. Phone 03-52 788 788. \$17 one way. For more info, visit <http://www.avalonairport.com.au>

### 2. Gull bus from Tullamarine Airport (Qantas, Virgin arrivals)

The bus to Geelong leaves Tullamarine approximately hourly on weekdays, and approximately 1.5 to 2-hourly on weekends. There is no need to pre-book. Full fare is \$25 one way / \$45 return. Student concession is \$20 one way / \$36 return. For more info, visit <http://www.gull.com.au>

### 3. Train from Southern Cross (Spencer St) Station to Geelong – for those arriving in Melbourne on interstate trains.

Get the train on the Melbourne to Marshall line. It departs approximately hourly. There is no need to pre-book. For more info, visit [http://www.viclink.com.au/timetables/timetable\\_options.php?type=vline&id=V100](http://www.viclink.com.au/timetables/timetable_options.php?type=vline&id=V100)

## Accommodation in Geelong

Some billets are still available in Melbourne for people who attend the conference from interstate. Because these places are very limited, they will be allocated to comrades in most financial need. To request a billet, please send your details to [national\\_office@socialist-alliance.org](mailto:national_office@socialist-alliance.org) by Thursday October 26.

For members with part-time or full-time work, some inexpensive accommodation options are listed below. Comrades are responsible for booking their own accommodation for the conference, but if you would like more information about these options, please do not hesitate to contact the Geelong Socialist Alliance branch at [geelong@socialist-alliance.org](mailto:geelong@socialist-alliance.org) or 5222 6900.

	Address	Phone (03)	Single	Double	Walk from conf
<b>MOTELS</b>					
Bay City Motel	231 – 235 Malop St, Geelong <a href="http://www.baycitymotel.com.au">www.baycitymotel.com.au</a>	5221 1933	\$100	\$110	10 min
Kardinia Motel	422 La Trobe Tce (Cnr Sharp St) <a href="http://www.kardiniaparkmotel.com.au">www.kardiniaparkmotel.com.au</a>	5221 5188	\$75	\$90	20 min
Aberdeen Motor Inn	9 Aberdeen St	5221 2177	\$75-90		15 min
Comfort Inn Eastern Sands	1 Bellerine St, Geelong	5221 5577			
Kangaroo Motel	16 The Esplanade Geelong	52214022			
Best Western Admiralty Inn	66 McKillop Street, Geelong <a href="http://geelongmotorinn.bestwestern.com.au">geelongmotorinn.bestwestern.com.au</a>	52214288	\$140	5 min	
<b>CARAVAN PARKS</b>					
Barwon Caravan & Tourist Park	153 Barrabool Rd, Belmont	5243 3842			30 min
Riverglen Holiday Park	75 Barrabool Rd Belmont	5243 5505	cabins		40 min
Billabong Caravan Park	59 Barabool Rd, Belmont	5243 6225			
City Southside Caravan Park	87 Barrabool Rd, Belmont	5243 3788			
<b>BACKPACKERS ABOVE PUBS</b>					
The National Hotel Backpackers	191 Moorabool St, Geelong	5229 1211			1 min
Irish Murphy's	30 Aberdeen St, Geelong	5221 4335	\$25	10 min	
Carlton Central Hotel	13- 21 Malop St, Geelong	5229 1954			